

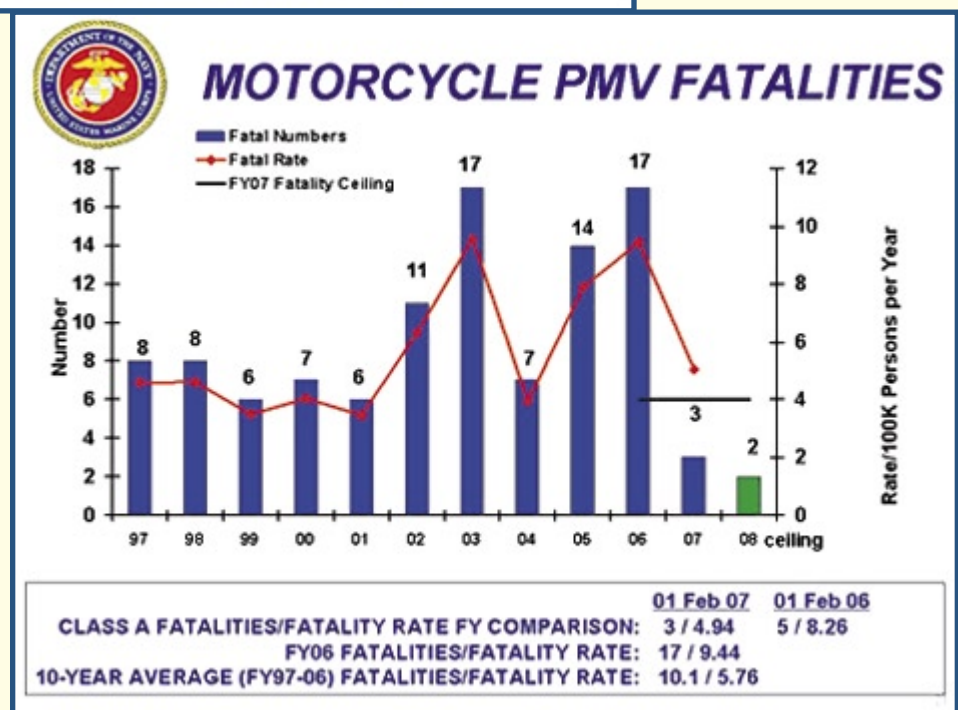
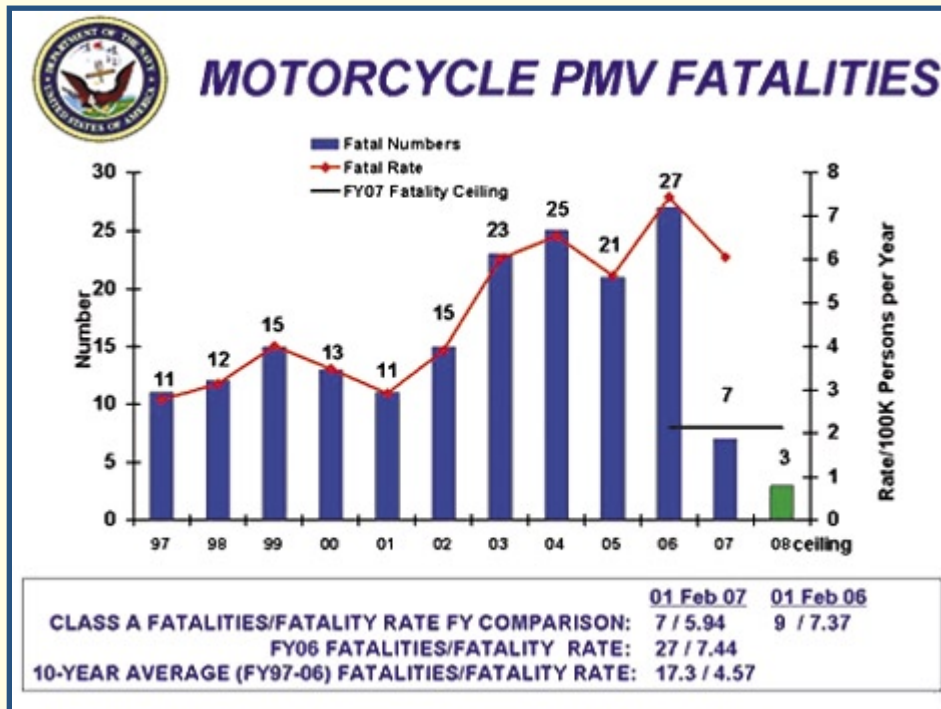
Motorcycling: Journey to Adventure or Misadventure?

On a short hop or a cross-country tour, in solitude or with friends, motorcycling is the ultimate journey to fun, challenges, relaxation, and adventure.

When you ride a motorcycle, you're not merely passing through the scenery. You're an active participant in a journey that engages all your senses—from the salty bite of ocean air on the rim of the Pacific,

to the warmth of a Kansas sunrise on your shoulders, or the sight of the pure autumn colors of Vermont. Suddenly, even the long way home doesn't seem long enough.

Motorcycling is all these things...and more...and, unfortunately, it isn't all good. Consider, for example, these statistics.





Air Force photo by SSgt. Don Branum, USAF

In the News

Motorcycle riders are at least three times more likely to die in a crash than automobile operators. Some fatalities involve riders who haven't obtained a proper motorcycle license or haven't taken the required motorcycle-safety training. Another part of the problem is a growing increase in fatalities among older riders, who may be just getting into or returning to motorcycling after several years. Helmets have proven to be effective in preventing many fatal injuries (estimated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to be 37 percent effective)—but they have to be worn.

Some riders are not in compliance with current instructions. Commands should identify service members who ride motorcycles and ensure they are licensed properly and have had the motorcycle-safety training required by OpNavInst 5100.12G or Marine Corps Order 5100.19E. Other suggested initiatives are as follows:

- Recommend service members use a Snell Memorial Foundation-approved helmet, rather than one just approved by the Department of Transportation. Snell helmets are more expensive but offer better protection.
- Ensure riders wear the proper protective clothing and equipment recommended in OpNavInst 5100.12G or Marine Corps Order 5100.19E.

Short Narratives

29 Jan 07 – An AW2 assigned to Surface Rescue Swimmer School died when he failed to negotiate a turn on his motorcycle. He was traveling at excessive speed.

21 Jan 07 – A staff sergeant from 4TH MAW, MACG48, MASS 6 was riding with a group of motorcyclists when he failed to make a turn. His bike struck a guardrail, and he was hit by the motorcyclist following him.

13 Jan 07 – An AO3 from HS-7 was killed in a motorcycle mishap.

08 Jan 07 – An HM2 with the Naval Survival Training Institute was riding his motorcycle at high speed when he hit the back of an SUV and suffered fatal injuries.

26 Dec 06 – A Marine private attached to CNATT Unit Lemoore lost control of his motorcycle in Crosby, Texas, and suffered fatal injuries.

24 Dec 06 – An RP3 from NatNavMedCen Bethesda died from injuries he received in a motorcycle accident near Rocky Mount, N.C.

16 Dec 06 – A PFC from H & S CO, Marine Corps Security Force Battalion, was riding his motorcycle in Norfolk when an SUV hit and killed him.

09 Nov 06 – A sergeant from MARCENT HQ was killed in a motorcycle wreck in Northdale, Fla. He lost control in a curve.

05 Nov 06 – A lieutenant lost control of his motorcycle in Washington state and was ejected into the path of a car that hit him. He suffered fatal injuries.

04 Nov 06 – An AOAN from VFA-147 lost control of his motorcycle while doing wheelies in a neighborhood and suffered fatal injuries.

Best Practices

FltASWTraCen San Diego – This command started a comprehensive motorcycle-safety program, run by a designated motorcycle-safety officer. The core of this initiative is a mentorship program specifically focused toward safe-riding practices. The program pairs inexperienced operators with experienced ones who ride similar motorcycles to help the new riders gain experience and safe skills. The program begins with an evaluation of the skill level of each rider. Mentors take the proteges out for check rides to evaluate actual skill levels. Novice riders then start on a training pipeline designed to help them gain proficiency. Riding events during the workweek facilitate rider evaluations. For full details, go to: http://safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/ashore/Motorcycle_Mentorship_Prgm.htm. ■

For more motorcycle best practices, go to: <http://safetycenter.navy.mil/bestpractices/ashore/default.htm>.